

House Resolution 499

By: Representatives Powell of the 29th, Hanner of the 148th, Shaw of the 176th, Porter of the 143rd, Parrish of the 156th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring and remembering the life of Mr. Thomas Watson Brown, Sr.; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Georgia has lost one of its most distinguished citizens with the passing of
4 Thomas Watson Brown, Sr., a distinguished lawyer and philanthropist of Marietta; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Brown had a highly developed sense of history and reverence for the past;
6 he was the great-grandson of Tom Watson, a fiery national leader of the Populist Party and
7 1896 vice presidential candidate; the son of a well-known Washington radio journalist,
8 Walter "Red" Brown; and the proud owner of an 1842 antebellum home; and

9 WHEREAS, educated at Princeton and Harvard, he was a passionate lover of learning who
10 donated generously to the University of Georgia and to Mercer University Press, to which
11 he left his 15,000 volume library; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Brown claimed that he despised Republicans and was described by others
13 as a "Jeffersonian Democrat," and, although he never ran for office, he had a major impact
14 on politics through his many donations, his many close friendships with both Republicans
15 and Democrats, and through his vigorous wit and highly sharpened skill in debate; and

16 WHEREAS, to his many acquaintances, he was as brilliant as he was enigmatic; only
17 Thomas Brown could simultaneously display the Confederate flag at his home, maintain a
18 grudge against the Republican Party for its actions at the onset of the Civil War, and receive
19 the Martin Luther King Jr. Center's community service award, personally presented by
20 Coretta Scott King; and

21 WHEREAS, as the owner of Spartan Communications, a chain of broadcast stations he
22 inherited from his father, he was a champion of the free press who contributed \$50,000 each
23 election cycle for the Atlanta Press Club to air candidate debates; and

1 WHEREAS, he was an unrelenting defender of his great-grandfather, Thomas Watson, a
2 publisher and U.S. Senator who ran with William Jennings Bryan in 1896 and whose statue
3 stands with raised fists on the steps of the Georgia State Capitol building; and

4 WHEREAS, as an attorney, Mr. Brown was instrumental in bringing the MARTA transit
5 system to metro Atlanta in the 1970s; and

6 WHEREAS, he leaves behind three daughters, Melissa Ellen Brown Cummings, Anne
7 Georgia Lawrence Brown McCarrol, and Elizabeth Courtney Brown; a son, Thomas Watson
8 Brown, Jr.; and eight grandchildren; and

9 WHEREAS, in life he commanded the esteem of his fellow Georgians; at his death it is
10 fitting and proper that we extend sympathy to his family, colleagues, and friends.

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
12 the members of this body join together to honor and remember the incredible life of Mr.
13 Thomas Watson Brown, Sr., and extend their most sincere condolences to his family.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
15 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Mr. Thomas Watson Brown,
16 Sr.